



# AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY ENGINEER RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR FLIGHT SAFETY CONTRIBUTIONS

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## Payoff

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Mr. Ralph Speelman's recognition by the International Birdstrike Committee (IBSC) for contributions in reducing aircraft vulnerability to birdstrike is the first time an American or engineer was recognized in the 30 year history of the IBSC. Mr. Speelman's accomplishments have been instrumental in reducing the aviation birdstrike hazard that costs the Air Force over \$100 million per year and world aviation \$3-4 billion per year.

## Accomplishment

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Mr. Ralph Speelman, III, of the Air Vehicles Directorate received the Mike Kuhring Award from the IBSC. This award is presented for contributions to improve flight safety through reductions of the risk associated with aircraft birdstrikes. The IBSC is a federation of about 30 countries that are working to improve flight safety by developing and applying technology to reduce birdstrike frequency and increase birdstrike tolerance.

## Background

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An IBSC Mike Kuhring Award is presented every two years to recognize contributions to improve flight safety by reducing the problem of birdstrikes. Mr. Speelman's contributions included his long leadership of Air Force Research Laboratory efforts to develop, transition and teach others how to use the technology for birdstrike resistant windshield systems; and laboratory efforts to integrate aero-science and bio-science to determine a means of causing birds to move out of an aircraft flight path. This aero-bio science integration is seen as a potential breakthrough which can be exploited to prevent continued significant catastrophic losses.